

NET

SCHEME NEWS



"Only a life lived in the service to others is worth living." - Albert Einstein

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." - Mahatma Gandhi

NET Section -
Here to Serve

NCS

LSES

ExEL

SuRE

PLP-R

MmT2.0

KIP

WIELD

REACT

Stellar

DTS

MmT

PLP-R/W

GET-ED

Full names of NET Section Projects on the last page

We, educators, are like gardeners. We create conditions to motivate, facilitate and enable learning as gardeners do to enable plants to flourish.

Inspiring TED talk speaker cum creativity guru, Sir Ken Robinson, once compared teachers to gardeners. In his much acclaimed TED talk in 2006, *Bring on the Learning Revolution*, he stressed the need “to change metaphors” in our discourse on education, arguing that “as human flourishing is not a mechanical process”, but rather “an organic process”, educators should do what farmers do for their crops and create conditions to help children flourish and realise their potential. The metaphor was further used in his address to students at Full Sail University in 2008 to suggest that, like great gardeners, great teachers know what the conditions for students’ growth are, and, with great teaching, “growth is possible at any time”.

In this issue of the Newsletter, we would like to extend Sir Ken Robinson’s metaphor and share stories about how we make our classrooms and our schools a better place for learning. As gardeners, we are building a *Learning Garden* where everybody learns and contributes to each other’s knowledge. In this *Learning Garden*, not only students, but also teachers learn, as we know and believe that when teachers learn well, our students learn better. As part of this learning community, our Advisory Teachers and Regional NET Coordinators play no lesser role as gardeners and as learners.

“I strongly encourage the tripartite partnership between NET, LETs and AT. These are the people doing wonders in promoting English language learning in our school.”

“...very important that all panel members share the same view – to empower our students to read... Reading lessons are no longer boring to them as reading has become relevant, fun and interactive.”

Our *Learning Garden* is rich in the loam that provides abundant opportunities for learning. To cater for students’ diverse needs and interests, we design different garden plots that create optimal conditions for students’ growth. We tap into the power of technology. We explore different strategies to provide engaging learning experiences. We enrich our school-based curriculum with the development and use of text sets. We promote

reading and the explicit teaching of reading skills and strategies. We introduce innovative practices, such as using puppetry in the classroom. We also develop learning partnerships with others in the wider community to promote debating and creative expression, and to broaden our students’ horizons.

“The fascinating feature of this international debating contest lies in the differences between debating styles... HK Team 4 emerged as the ultimate winner of this year’s competition... The net result is international cooperation and friendship...”

In this Information Age, students are digitally connected. To develop an inviting landscape in our *Learning Garden* for our digital

natives, we keep abreast of ways to make the best possible use of technology to support learning. Teachers taking part in our Seed project, GEL.com (*Grammar and e-Learning for Communication*), are implementing different strategies for the use of technology and web-based resources to make grammar learning effective and provide meaningful opportunities for students to use their grammar knowledge for communication. While students are enjoying the use of technology for learning English, our teacher partners are experiencing professional growth working alongside their colleagues and our Advisory Teachers.

“My first GEL.com lesson was a real thrill... I am grateful for being involved in the GEL.com project, which makes my first year of teaching fruitful and memorable.”

"Skill makes reading a possibility. Motivation makes reading a reality¹." Apart from improving reading instruction², we have been exploring ways to motivate students to read and learn. Since the start of the school year, we have been forging learning partnerships with our Seed project schools in developing and using text sets, i.e. collections of multi-genre and multi-modal texts on themes of interest, to engage students in purposeful and pleasurable reading and to make connections between what they read and what they experience in their daily lives. In this *Learning Garden*, all parties learn and grow. As for the students, the power of their learning is unleashed when they find a purpose for, and develop an interest in, reading. Knowing how students develop their motivation to read, our project school teachers and Advisory Teachers put in extra effort to prepare captivating texts and design engaging learning experiences for students to develop their literacy skills and their ability to apply what they have learnt. As learning becomes contagious³, cross-pollination in our *Learning Garden* takes place.

"The development of a text set encourages teamwork and creativity from the teachers who have constantly been on the lookout for new ideas and texts for teaching the students."

Our *Learning Garden* involves gardeners not only in schools, but also in the wider community. In the first term of the school year, we collaborated with the European Union Office to Hong Kong and Macao to organise a calendar design competition that engaged four very different primary schools – a co-educational school, a girls' school, a school enrolling students with special needs and one on an outlying island with mostly non-Chinese speaking students. We shared the joy of the participating students as they gave full rein to their imagination and expressed their ideas in colourful paintings. More importantly, on this learning journey, these students became aware of different cultures and landscapes through researching and painting, which helped enhance their knowledge of the remarkable diversity yet similarity of countries. In the second term, with administrative support

"The EU calendar drawing competition was a great opportunity for our school to promote international-mindedness... The outcome was astounding and way beyond our expectations."

"...I was deeply attracted to this beautiful and romantic country... I was able to link my research to an art work and to the real world."

from our Regional Education Offices, we will hold the first puppetry competition engaging primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. Different professional development activities have been planned and some already conducted, including those with support from professional puppeteers, to prepare teachers of participating schools for the big event. Together we will create opportunities for meaningful and fun

use of the language. Together we will provide our students with successful and memorable experiences. What is equally valuable is that by so doing, we – LETs, NETs, Advisory Teachers and Regional NET Coordinators – are also enriching our own professional growth through this partnership.

Learning partners are always there to support the *Learning Garden* as long as we are determined to help our students and also ourselves flourish, we are will spare no effort to build learning partnerships. We shared in this issue can inspire more joint efforts to nurture so that it will continue to thrive and make learning

"The tent provided a safe environment in which students felt more relaxed and comfortable to speak out as the pressure was no longer on them, it was now on their puppet!"

building of our look for them. To determined and hope that the stories our *Learning Garden* contagiously engaging.



Joe Leung
Chief Curriculum Development Officer, NET Section

¹ These two statements conclude an online article entitled "When Children Read Because They Want To, Not Because They Have To" by Laura J. Colker (2007), which can be accessed at https://castl.duq.edu/Conferences/Library03/PDF/Intrinsic_Motivation/When_Children_Read.pdf.

² In this school year, we have been collaborating with NETs and LETs to promote supported reading in some primary schools and the explicit teaching of reading skills and strategies in a number of secondary schools as part of our school support service.

³ The idea is borrowed from a quote by Marva Collins, a Chicago educator: "The essence of teaching is to make learning contagious, to have one idea spark another."

NET Induction 2014/15



'It was motivational and everyone was friendly and approachable.'



'It was very enjoyable. The guided reading and shared reading sessions were very useful. It was interesting to see different strategies.'



'The learning of Cantonese was fun and engaging.'



'Contractual matters talk was useful.'



'Everyone was friendly, professional and knowledgeable.'



'Really fantastic. I enjoyed all the presentations and the two NETs were fantastic and inspiring.'



'Networking opportunity was also great.'



'Very useful in terms of culturally relevant information for adjusting to the new language learning environment.'

A new journey starts with GEL.com

Information technology offers opportunities for students to learn by accessing texts and multimedia materials, and to communicate in new ways in and out of classrooms. Our school has been using iPads in the teaching of Chinese Language and Mathematics. We wish to integrate technology in our English lessons as well. That is the reason for inviting GEL.com to our school. It stands for Grammar and e-Learning for Communication, a Seed project of the NET Section.



As a new teacher, I was rather nervous at first since I did not know much about the project. My worries were eased at the first meeting. We started co-planning meetings at the very beginning of the school term. Our team brainstormed ideas and worked out lesson plans. We even tried out new iPad apps to introduce innovative teaching strategies in our classrooms.



My first GEL.com lesson was a real thrill. Everything went smoothly. The lesson was co-conducted with our NET, the Advisory Teacher and IT

technicians. My students were so attentive and they followed all the given instructions. They not only worked as individuals, but also completed the tasks with their partners using iPads. We expected students to encounter technical problems while using iPads but they managed well and achieved most of the learning outcomes.

The GEL.com is a rewarding project. Our team gets to share ideas and design lessons collaboratively, which enables me to learn from my colleagues. Besides, the active participation of my students motivates me to prepare better lessons so as to promote their learning. I am grateful for being involved in the GEL.com project, which makes my first year of teaching fruitful and memorable.

Mak King Fung, Kelvin, LET, TWGHs Sin Chu Wan Primary School



Learning with an iPad

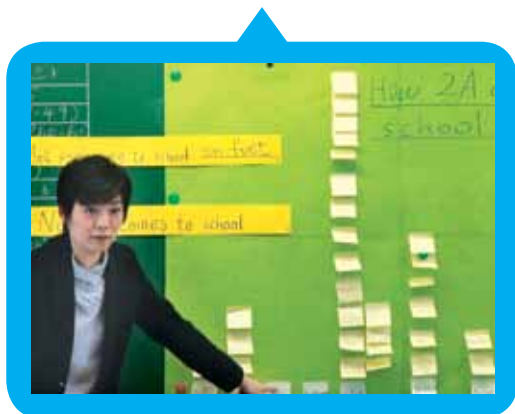
The DTS Project, a projection of my dream

Before coming to the NET Section, I always wondered how to motivate my students to do more reading outside the classroom. I felt that as teachers, we could better utilise the wonderfully rich English resources available and try new strategies and approaches to help motivate the students more. Luckily, I have been seconded to work with the Advisory Teaching Team supporting the Seed project, Development of Text Sets (DTS) for Enriching the School-based English Language Curriculum at the Primary Level, and thus my dream has come true.

Text sets are a collection of materials that include diverse resources on a variety of subject matters, genre or themes. The DTS project aims to explore ways to develop and use texts for enriching the school-based English Language curriculum. It provides materials for primary students to learn English in an authentic environment and establish a foundation for life-long learning.



I am Cyrus.
I live in Fo Tan.
I come to school by school bus.
My helper takes me to the school bus stop.
I can see many trees on the way to school.



The Advisory Teaching Team and the English teachers from my school are working collaboratively on this project. Lessons are carefully planned and the learning activities are conducted in a meaningful and inspiring way. Students can feel that the whole lesson is worthwhile, interesting and enjoyable. They can practise using English in real and authentic settings through exploring information from online sources or printed text sets at various reading levels.

I believe opportunities to learn English are everywhere and need not be confined to the classroom or the textbook. Students need to know that English is a useful tool for everyday communication both in and out of the classroom. By engaging students in authentic learning experiences that demand interaction, co-operation and decision-making, active learning occurs.

I would like to see this DTS project result in more students developing sound reading habits and interest in learning English, both of which will greatly facilitate their language acquisition.

Josephine Ho, Seconded Teacher, NET Section

This year my school has joined the Seed project, Development of Text Sets (DTS) for Enriching the School-based English Language Curriculum of the Primary Level, and it has been a very positive experience.

We started planning in August and jumped straight into our first text set in September. We have chosen 'Celebrating the 100th Day of School' as our theme as we want to help the Primary One students to familiarise themselves with their new learning environment and to encourage them to enjoy coming to school. The theme leads to a celebration on their 100th day of school (28th January, 2015), on which the students will bring 100 things to school to share with their schoolmates.



There were some initial workshops including guidance on how to identify and choose quality texts and core texts as well as an introduction to strategies for teaching a text set. Since the start of the project, the Advisory Teachers have been providing us with ideas, materials and texts. Their onsite support has made the whole planning and implementation process a very smooth one. There has also been plenty of reflection and evaluation of our progress to ensure that learning and teaching continue to improve. My co-teachers have been very supportive and active in the DTS project, which has helped to make it a big success. The development of a text set encourages teamwork and creativity from the teachers who have constantly been on the lookout for new ideas and texts for teaching the students.

The range of texts that our students have experienced has been much wider, more relevant and engaging than ever before. We have introduced storybooks, information reports, poems, songs and video clips while ensuring that there is a rich language environment with plenty of opportunity to read different books and posters around the school.

In the design of our text-set module, we have included shared reading, guided reading, shared writing and guided writing, as well as giving students the opportunity to read at home and at recess by providing additional materials relating to the theme. Our students have been given plenty of opportunity for both guided and independent practice with both their writing and speaking as we constantly encourage them to speak to their partners and share ideas.

Overall, I would say that developing a text set has given the local teachers and myself the opportunity to approach teaching differently. Being new to the NET Scheme this year, I am thankful for the invaluable support that I have received from my Principal, the Panel Chair, the co-teachers and the Advisory Teachers from the NET Section, EDB, all of whom have done much to allow the project to move forward. I have been very happy with the support I have received every step of the way.

Chris Eagers, NET, SKH St. Peter's Primary School



EU Calendar Drawing Competition



Mr Vincent Pike, Head of EU Office to Hong Kong and Macao

The European Union's yearly Calendar Drawing Competition finished in style with a grand finale. Sixteen beautiful drawings done by students from four Hong Kong schools were selected for our 2015 calendar. I can truly say that the quantity and quality of the drawings is better than ever!

The four participating schools were SAHK BM Kotewall Memorial School, CCC Chuen Yuen Second Primary School, Bui O Public School and Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section), which hosted the prize ceremony in its beautiful hall.



Each school was assigned four EU Member States to draw, and each drawing had to be accompanied by a short text describing the drawing and the country. The drawing gave the students an opportunity to practise and display their artistic talents, while the research they had to do on their countries provided an opportunity for them to learn about the very different cultures and rich histories of the 28 EU countries and the 506 million people that live in them.

The European Union's motto is "Unity in Diversity", and I hope the competition has sparked the students' curiosity about Europe and perhaps given them a desire to one day visit, or maybe even to study, in the European Union.

European Union, Office to Hong Kong and Macao



CCC Chuen Yuen Second Primary School

The EU calendar competition was a great opportunity for our school to promote international mindedness. The students who were involved in the competition were given a great briefing by the EU, which explored ideas, facts and figures for our four selected countries. Our students took on board the ideas with great enthusiasm and the whole event gradually went from a simple drawing competition to an inquiry-based learning project. It was also a great opportunity to work along with the art teacher. Indeed, this competition had sparked cross-curricular activity, not only for the students but also for the teachers.

The outcome was astounding and way beyond our expectations. We hope more schools in Hong Kong can be given the same opportunity that we have had.

Lung Fung Yi, EPC & Jonathan Lee, NET, CCC Chuen Yuen Second Primary School



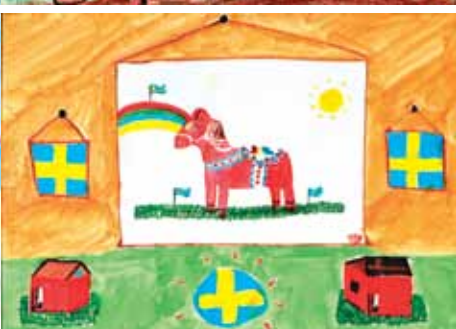
Overall champion presented with a special prize by Dr Catherine KK Chan, Deputy Secretary for Education & Mr Vincent Pike, Head of EU Office to Hong Kong and Macao



SAHK BM Kotewall Memorial School

The project was a great learning experience for our students. Initially they had very little knowledge about the various countries they would paint and write about. They did research online and were supported and encouraged by the NET and teachers from the art department. Most importantly the students enjoyed the whole process. They were able to learn in a creative manner and it was tremendous to have so many areas of knowledge incorporated into the task. Throughout the activity, the NET Section of the EDB and EU staff were supportive. Now, the students involved with this project and their parents have a published piece of work that will remain as a memento for a long time.

Alastair Johnson, NET, SAHK BM Kotewall Memorial School



Among all the activities, I enjoyed the artwork most. I chose the Netherlands for my drawing. I drew a windmill, a river and a boat because they are the icons of the country. Throughout this whole learning journey, I learnt a lot about the European Union.

**Nicole Lau, Student,
Maryknoll Convent School**

In my drawing, there is a rabbit called Holland

Lop. It is not only a popular house pet in the Netherlands, but also known for its sweet temperament. I have also drawn some windmills with many tulips which are the landmarks of the Netherlands.

Sammy Cheung, Student, Maryknoll Convent School

I enjoyed the EU talk the most as it taught me a lot about the European countries and flags. It also taught me how to say hello and good morning in different languages. I drew a river, a windmill, a castle, and some big tulips and small tulips in many bright colours. I have picked up more drawing techniques throughout this learning journey.

Alison Lee, Student, Maryknoll Convent School

After school, I started doing research about my assigned country - France. Looking at the pictures and other cultural information about France, I was deeply attracted to this beautiful and romantic country. I started drawing the Eiffel Tower and some delicious French food. I am happy that I learnt some new information about EU and I was able to link my research to an art work and to the real world.

Jessica Wang, Student, Maryknoll Convent School

I got some books about Portugal from the Tung Chung Public Library and studied them. Finally, I chose the football player, Cristiano Ronaldo, and the dessert, the egg tart for my drawing. I also learned how to draw the landscape of the country in the Visual Arts lessons. Therefore, my final drawings had the landscape, the football and the egg tart with a colourful background.

Cheng, Nga Lok (Jolly), Student, Bui O Public School

While I was looking for pictures about the country I worked on, Sweden, I saw the red horse. I wanted to include that in my drawing, so I searched for more information about it, like the meaning of it. Then I drew the red horse as a painting on the wall in a house. I got many ideas from the internet and I was so amazed at how useful information technology is to our daily life. Finally, I also included the red house and a typical hut in my drawing.

Paul-Lou Bouchard, Student, Bui O Public School



Maryknoll Convent School (Primary Section) with Principal Mrs Josephine Lo (third from left), who provided the venue for the prize-giving ceremony



Bui O Public School

Puppet Master

Inspired by the puppetry workshop at the EDB NET Section, I returned to school feeling energised and ready to try something new and exciting in my school's English ECA class. With the support from my English panel chair and with great planning support from my AT, Miss Garlanda Kwan, I was able to create a puppet-making and performing course called 'Puppet Master'. The course was designed for KS2 students mainly in P5-6.

The main idea was to increase student confidence through speaking and performing with puppets. Students were exposed to a range of exciting puppets such as stick, wooden spoon and paper bag puppets. It was great fun making the puppets, which also allowed opportunities for English language use such as asking students to describe their puppets.

To make the lessons more language focused and less arts and crafts based, it took a little teacher preparation time before class to help speed up the puppet-making process. This preparation was well worth it as it allowed more time for every student in every lesson to perform. Each lesson was designed to have a particular focus which would then prepare the students for the final performance at the end of the course. For example, they made stick puppets and practised giving weather reports about different countries. Then we made wooden spoon puppets and practised a market dialogue about special fruit, followed by the use of paper bag puppets to perform a story about special fruit, powers and helping countries. We encouraged creativity and language manipulation in scripts and performances throughout. I made a performing tent in which students could perform individually, in pairs or in groups. The tent provided a safe environment in which students felt more relaxed and comfortable to speak out as the pressure was no longer on them. It was on their puppet!



Ms Sun Yi, LET, students and Daniel Peter Ferguson, NET

Overall I'd say it's been a challenging process in terms of content, planning, preparing and adapting but nonetheless has been very enjoyable and rewarding. It's great to see the students actively and enthusiastically involved and see how they gradually develop more confidence each week. The fact that they can keep their puppets after their performances fills them with a great sense of joy and pride. This course also produces various opportunities for enriching the English environment throughout my school such as sharing pictures on the English notice board, performing in assemblies and uploading videos on to our school website for students to view at home!

Daniel Peter Ferguson, NET, St. Antonius Primary School

NET Section News

Watch out for our 'Story to Stage' Puppetry Competition for primary schools and the 'Hands on Stage' Puppetry Competition for secondary schools – a collaborative project between the NET Section and four School Development Sections of the Education Bureau: Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Shatin and North District.



Letting Go

The English teachers at Hong Kong Baptist Convention Primary School are no strangers to change. Six years ago, the school took the decision to move away from textbook curriculum delivery and has since moved towards school-based modules with phonics teaching at the core. Letting go of textbooks is a leap of faith but one which encourages, perhaps even demands, that teachers be very creative, innovative and collaborative. One of these collaborations within the P6 team last year resulted in an e-LEARNING experiment framed around the following questions.

1. *What would happen if we designed a PROJECT task that gave students more control over topic choice, learning mode, time management, presentation style and assessment?*
2. *What would happen if we let go of control as 'teachers' and guided students to teach themselves?*

We decided to be ambitious. We asked the students to form groups of 4, pick a topic, teach themselves about it, prepare a 30-minute lesson and teach the topic to another group. We gave each student a project booklet with support materials and an iPad with software that could produce PowerPoint presentations. We offered advice on topics, suggested information sources, helped translate and simplify subject specific vocabulary and concepts, gave critical and timely feedback to groups on their proposed lesson plans and provided tips on presentation skills.

Student engagement was never an issue. They were heads down and into it straight away. But our challenge was to not give answers but rather to ask probing questions so that students could find their own answers, thereby deepening their understanding.



The final lessons that our students 'taught' were diverse, creative and most importantly, inclusive. All members spoke English during their presentations and everyone in the group had a specific job. In the end, 85% of the students thought their lesson was successful, but more impressively, they wanted a chance to do it again so they could modify their plan based on the feedback from the first experience.

We know that it's difficult to use methodology like this a lot of the time. But we try to remember the principle - be the questioner guiding from the back as well as the voice instructing at the front.

One of the P6 team summed it up: "My strongest feeling at the end of this project was that I was learning with my students - I didn't have all the answers but I didn't need to. We were partners."

Kate Edge, NET, Hong Kong Baptist Convention Primary School



Front from left: Janice Yeung, Isabella Yeung, Teresa Chow, Pat Cheung, Charis Seto
Back from left: Kate Edge, Connie Siu

Reading Mums



Our school, Po Leung Kuk Gold and Silver Exchange Society Pershing Tsang School, is fortunate enough to have a wonderful group of reading mums who come every Monday for two lessons with each of our P2 classes.

This programme originated through a group of mums approaching EDB asking if they could assist in any schools' English reading programmes. EDB referred them to our school.



The 'Mums' work one on one with our P2 students developing and practising their English reading. Each student has a reading log to complete in which the 'Mums' can leave a comment about the students' reading for the teacher and the students have a dictionary in which to record unfamiliar words.

The students are grouped into four reading levels. There are four corresponding boxes from which students may select a book. This ensures our students are reading appropriate books and can continue to progress with their reading. All our 'Mums' have name tags and the co-ordinator tries to keep the same student with their 'Mum' throughout the year.



This year we have included reading games such as HANGMAN and use small whiteboards for writing and drawing. Big books also keep the students interested in reading.

Our students benefit greatly from this programme because it allows for one-on-one interaction and helps to develop positive relationships not only with English books, but also with the 'Reading Mums'.

Sue Devaney, NET, Po Leung Kuk Gold and Silver Exchange Society Pershing Tsang School



Making Reading Happen

Supported reading has been a great way for us to enrich and add variety to our school-based curriculum. Two years ago, with the suggestions and support of our Advisory Teacher we trialled an information text from the NET Section with our P5 students. The book came with a unit of work that included a variety of supporting materials which we adapted to suit our school needs. Through co-teaching and co-planning we found there was great flexibility with the materials and we could easily incorporate them into our scheme of work.

Most importantly, our students clearly enjoyed every step of the process and through different reading and pre-writing activities they could easily approach the final task of writing an information report. They now even collaborate to create their own short information report books based on an animal of their choice.

Currently we are using a procedural text unit on Space in Primary 6. This unit requires students to follow instructions for three cross-curricular learning stations.

The students have gained a lot from this experience and have all been enthusiastic in trying out new tasks which require independent learning and active engagement with the task.



Tom Robertshaw (NET) and Winnie Ng (EPC) working together with the P6D students at one of the space learning stations



Tom and Sharon Poon (LET) working with P6C students

Now we have incorporated other books based on different text types that come with lesson plans for P4-6. The introduction of supported reading in our school has enabled the students to be taught reading comprehension skills and the follow up activities give reading a specific purpose. We hope by continuing to use and develop supported reading materials we can enrich the learning experience for our students in the years to come.

Tom Robertshaw, NET, Lui Ming Choi Primary School



Chinese YMCA Primary School

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Working together

It is my belief that one core factor contributing to a school's success is collaboration among its staff members, and I am pleased to say that our English Panel is a fine example of such collaboration. I strongly encourage the tripartite partnership between NET, LETs and AT. To this end, the school has co-planning time time-tabled to facilitate the development of a close relationship not only among the NET, LETs and the CAs but also with the AT, our dear Advisory Teacher from the NET Section of the Education Bureau. These are the people doing wonders in promoting English language learning in our school. I am glad to see the PSM (English) and the English Panel Chair working closely together to ensure and sustain quality teaching across the whole English panel. Their involvement in NET and teacher recruitment is also contributing much to achieving this objective. I am happy to see our NET working well with the local teachers in supporting the students. I am also eager to invite our AT, Ms Helena Wong, to come and observe our English lessons and to give quality feedback to the teachers afterwards.

Apart from providing time for co-planning, a special budget has also been assigned to the NET, who enjoys much flexibility in the use of the money. For instance, the NET has bought some props related to the PLP- RW units. Students are encouraged to play with the props and enjoy games in the English Room during recess and lunch time so that what the students have learnt in the lessons such as ideas, vocabulary and sentence patterns can be consolidated while they are playing with the props and engaged in games.



Local teachers Lam Ching Yan (left) and Ho Tse Kin (right) working with NET (middle)



From left: Suen Kwan Ying (Principal), Hung Shing Kam (PSM English), Chan Yuen Wah (PSM), Cheung Yu Ling (English Panel Chair)

As the principal, I believe I also have a role to play in developing my teachers' professional capacity. The school encourages staff to attend CPDs to up-skill themselves and time is reserved for school-based workshops to facilitate teachers' professional development. My job is to provide leadership by way of inspiration. I am truly glad to see that my perseverance is impacting well on teachers who are showing more confidence in trialling new pedagogy despite some initial uncertainties.

We all have a distinct role to play, and in our school, we all love our roles. Together we work towards the same goal – providing the best for, and bringing out the best in, our students.

Rita Suen, Principal, Chinese YMCA Primary School

Teaching Students to Read in a Secondary School

My former students used to find reading lessons boring. This might be because the lessons were mostly about explaining difficult vocabulary and checking answers to comprehension questions. The students learned what happened in a passage that I taught them but when they came across another text, they could understand very little about it.



Joyce Li, Kurtis Li, Cathy Ho and Karmen Mok

As a few of my colleagues and I have learned more about explicit teaching of reading, we decided to co-develop some lessons where we would treat reading as a process and teach the students how to read. We used visual support, like PowerPoint, to demonstrate the reading process explicitly in the class. Students' awareness of learning and applying reading strategies was raised as they were taught, guided and supported in the lessons. We engaged the students by asking them well-planned guiding questions to focus them on the selected parts of the text and have them

interact with the text, the teacher and their peers. As the students became more used to this kind of learning in the lessons, they were given more opportunities of leading the discussion themselves. Reading lessons are no longer boring to them as reading has become relevant, fun and interactive.

It was hard work to start but we were pleased to see that the students were more motivated to read as they became engaged in the lessons. As a panel chair, I think that it is very important that all the panel members share the same view – to empower our students to read. We should put our heads together in the co-planning lessons to discuss the teaching strategies, develop learning and teaching materials and set different modes of assessments. I have to thank the school management that encouraged this to happen by scheduling the co-planning time and by supporting the changes that we would bring into the classroom and the curriculum. I believe that with a collaborative team, we would be able to help the students to read more effectively and help them develop a love of reading.

Karmen Mok, EPC, CCC Kwei Wah Shan College

The NET Section - Here to Serve

For the sixth year in a row, the NET Section Office has packed shoe boxes and packs for different charities in Hong Kong. Last Christmas, with donations from office members, there were 37 shoeboxes for children and 22 packs for elderly people. The shoeboxes included items such as toys, balls, stuffed animals, jump ropes, craft items, pens, pencils, sharpeners, lip gel, shower gel, socks, ball caps, writing paper, lollipops and candies. The packs included items such as toothpaste, toothbrush, combs, winter socks, hand cream, face towel, moisturising lip stick and wet wipes. Everything was well-organised, thanks to our AT Kit Yung.

Cheryl Christie, Advisory Teacher, NET Section



A HIGHLY- RATED SEASON OF SPEAKING!

It was an honour for me to accompany Hong Kong Team Number 4 to Shanghai between 4 and 9 July 2014 for the Southern District Schools' annual Shanghai-Hong Kong Cultural Exchange and Debating Competition. All in all, six teams from Hong Kong made the trip to Shanghai this year. Teams were formed by mixing debaters from six different Southern District schools - Pui Tak Canossian College, Aberdeen Technical School, Pui Yin Secondary School, SKH Lui Ming Choi Secondary School, SWCS Chan Pak Sha School and the Hong Kong True Light College. NETs and their colleagues took up the roles of coaches and advisers and worked closely with the students through the rounds of the competition. Students from different schools made friends and learnt to co-operate with each other in order to achieve success.



Teachers from Hong Kong: Ms Karin Samuel, Ms Twiggy Chung, Ms Joey Lai, Mr Perry Bayer, Ms Gabrielle Antoinettene, Mr Brett Craig and Mr Raymond Stehling



The winning team - HK Team Number 4

The fascinating feature of this international debating contest lies in the differences between debating styles. In general, this can be boiled down to Shanghaiese student debaters' concentration upon facts, and Hong Kong student debaters' concentration upon form. Both Hong Kong and Shanghaiese debating students have been able to learn from each other's debating styles. As a result, Hong Kong students have been able to improve their grasp of content while Shanghaiese students have been able to improve their presentation skills to be more consistently audience-friendly.

Hong Kong Team Number 4 emerged as the ultimate winner of this year's competition. This came about as a result of dedicated and talented students being backed up by their hard-working teachers. I thoroughly recommend this competition and feel that more Hong Kong teams should engage in English debating activities with their counterparts

across the border. The net result is international cooperation and friendship which, given the current climate, must be a good thing.

Perry Bayer, NET, CCC Ming Kei College

NET Section Projects

Primary

DTS (Development of Text Sets for Enriching the School-based English Language Curriculum at the Primary Level); **GEL.com** (Grammar & e-Learning for Communication); **KIP** (Key Stage 2 Integration Programme); **LSES** (Primary Literacy Programme - Reading and Writing (KST) with a focus on supporting primary students with lower socio-economic status); **NCS** (English Language Learning Support for Schools with Non-Chinese Speaking Students); **PLP-R** (Primary Literacy Programme - Reading); **PLP-R/W** (Primary Literacy Programme - Reading & Writing); **SURE** (Supported Reading in English); **WIELD** (Developing Key Stage 2 Students' Potential in Writing: intervention and Enrichment Programme)

Secondary

ExEL (Extending English Learning); **ExEL2C** (Extending English Learning to Content Subjects); **MmT** (Multimedia Tasking for the Junior Secondary English Classroom); **MmT2.0** (Multimedia Tasking 2.0 for the Junior Secondary English Classroom); **Stellar** (Strategies for English Learning through Language Arts and Reading)

Our Newsletter Team

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